

HUNTING AND FISHING

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membranes at the joints are then drilled out with a sharp stick of 411
hard wood, and small arrows are shaped and smoothed to fit accurately the bore of the blow-gun, the rear end of each arrow being tufted with a circle of feathers. A quick expulsion of the breath against one of these missiles inserted in the long tube drives it with sufficient force to kill small birds and game at a distance of a few yards. To use the implement effectively one must be able to stalk the game noiselessly and to bring the weapon to bear on it unawares. This gun may have been copied from Burman guns, for I do not find it in the hills.¹ The Karen hunters do not seem to be as skilful in its use as are the tribesmen of the Philippines, Borneo, and the Malay States.

The crossbow ("hkli") is one of the favorite implements for hunting among the Karen, but never seems to have found favor with them as a fighting weapon.²

The stock is made of some firm wood and has a small handle, like that of a cheek-gun.³ Its entire length is not more than three feet. The bow is shaped out of cutch wood ("nya"), which is very tough and resilient. It varies in length, but is usually about four feet. The string is twisted fibre, generally that of the roselle plant (314)
(*Hibiscus sabdariffa*). The bow is so strong that sometimes it takes two men to bend it, the string being held back by a rough trigger. The arrows consist of straight pieces of bamboo sharpened and slightly charred in the fire at one end to harden them, while they are tufted with feathers or fitted with a slip of dry palm or plantain leaf at the other end, which is bound around with string. Sometimes the arrow tips are barbed or supplied with flat iron points, and sometimes they are smeared with a thick gum taken from (314)
the Upas tree (*Antiaris ovaliflora*), which is indigenous to Burma. This species of tree is similar to that from which the Malay and Borneo tribes obtain poison for their arrows. The milky juice exudes from incisions made in the bark of the tree and dries into a dark viscous gum, which is very bitter. This poison is supposed to be more virulent if gathered at certain times of the year. After being smeared with the poisonous substance, the arrow-tip is al-

¹ For a discussion of the blow-gun, see Shant and Hingdon, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, Vol. I, 254-257.

² The crossbow is found all over Yunnan among the Lolo and the Lolo. It is used in China, having been evidently adapted from the Lolo, as its name there indicates. It is not seen in Tibet, or is it used by the Burmese or by the Malay tribes, except as a toy by the children in Borneo: Hux and MacDougal, *The Pagan Races of Borneo*, Vol. I, 44. The crossbow does not seem to be found in the Philippine Islands.

³ See p. 158.

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lowed to dry for a short time; but if kept too long it loses its noxious quality.

The crossbow will send an arrow thirty or forty yards with considerable accuracy. Those skilled in the use of the weapon can shoot to a greater range. The arrow will pierce the body of a man or a tiger and sometimes protrude on the other side. When wounded by a poisoned dart the Bwe may bind up the wound with the juice from young bamboo shoots, but he immediately tries to obtain what he considers a good antidote, namely, the hog-plum (*Spondius mangifera*), which he eats either dry or green. Failing to find this remedy, he resorts to alum. The Paku tribesmen eat a little of the poisonous gum itself, thus producing vomiting, which seems to counteract the effect of the poison in the wound. They sometimes apply alum to the injured part and bind it up. The Burmese, who greatly fear the consequences of being infected with the poison, poultice the wound with white sweet potato, which they chew into a paste for the purpose.⁴

The Karen have a kind of bow that resembles in general the long bow used in the English Army back in the fourteenth century. It is called "hki p' ti" and is fashioned of bamboo with elastic ends, being fitted with two parallel strings held an inch apart by little struts of bamboo. A tiny mat is plaited between the strings at the center to hold the pebbles or mud balls that are used instead of arrows. A block of hard wood, some four inches long and an inch and a half wide, is lashed to the middle of the bow. This serves as a handle by which a twisting motion is imparted to the bow when it is sprung, thus enabling the ball or pebble to pass to one side of the bow-shaft. This weapon is much used by children in shooting birds and small animals.

The trap is one of several automatic contrivances which the Karen fashion and leave in places frequented by birds or animals for their capture. Besides the spring trap, there are the box trap and the pitfall. As the name of the last contrivance suggests, the pitfall is a large hole that has been dug deep enough to prevent an animal from jumping out, once it has fallen in. All traces of the digging are obliterated, and the top is covered with branches and

⁴ Cf. Mason, *British Burma*, 489. For an account of the poison made in Borneo from the Ipoh (*Antiaris toxicaria*) see Hose and MacDougall, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. I, 218. Shant and Blagden, in *Pagan Tribes of the Malay Peninsula*, Vol. I, Chap. VI, pp. 242, ff., give an account of the preparation of poisons employed by the various tribes of that country. But a map of the area in which the poisons are used does not include Burma, probably because their use among the Karen was unknown to the writers.

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753 and causes all kinds of trouble, even sudden death. To avoid coming in contact with this smell, they usually do any frying that may be necessary out-of-doors and hold their hands over their noses to keep off the dread danger. For curative purposes smelling-salts are popular among both Karens and Burmans, when they can be bought in bazaar. Many of the medicines contain asafoetida and other pungent-smelling ingredients, which are thought to have an immediate effect on the patient. Bitter and acrid-tasting drugs are also in great favor.

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278 Apart from such remedies the Karen "medicine-teachers" resort to disgusting concoctions of the scrapings from the horns of the sambar, the hair and genitals of certain animals, tigers' and leopards' whiskers, certain parts of human corpses, the body hair of human beings, dung of all kinds, the scrapings from the charred ends of bamboos used in piercing corpses on the funeral pyre, etc. The urine of one sex is sometimes prescribed as a liniment for persons of the opposite sex. The following is a prescription taken from the *Karen Thesaurus*, where it is described as "a grand febrifuge": "Take the umbilical cord cut from a new-born child, the undigested kernels from the dung of a dog, white and red onions, ginger and black pepper in equal quantities; mix thoroughly and make into pills the size of the end of the little finger; dose, one at a time to be taken in hot water."¹¹

278 The formulae for other kinds of pills are even more disgusting than that just given. Draughts, lotions, liniments, smelling-compounds, liquids for bathing, hot and cold applications; herbs and other things to be hung over the patient, placed under his bed, or in an adjoining room, are among the strange mixtures that might be enumerated without interesting any but the curious.

¹¹ *The Karen Thesaurus*, new ed., Vol. I, p. 641.